

Newport Town Council
Meeting Minutes
July 16, 2015

Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Spencer announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Delaware Open Meeting Act.

Attendance: Mayor Michael Spencer, Vice Mayor John Joswick, Commissioner Timothy Chatburn, Commissioner Kathleen Joseph, Commissioner Michele MacDonald, Town Manager Wendy King, Police Chief Michael Capriglione, Solicitor Stephen Robinson.

Minutes from the meeting of June 18, 2015, were approved via motion by Mayor Spencer and seconded by Commissioner Kathy Joseph. All ayes.

Public Comment – Auditors from Barbacane Thornton, Pam Baker and Jeff Kowalczyk, were present to review the FY2014 audit. Financial statements were consistent with last year's audit. There were no exceptions and no modifiers and was presented as a standard opinion on the town's financial statements. Compensated absences and funds owed to the state were noted, but town management and officials are aware of these issues and it was not new information.

Bill Lower, Harvey Hanna & Associates, thanked the town for their support of the 5K run on Saturday, August 1, 2015. He brought pamphlets to be displayed in the municipal building. He offered the town a complimentary entry if a team was formed consisting of commissioners or other employees. Mayor Spencer will be starting the race.

Town Manager King presented her report. In review, she noted that the State Police Truck Team scheduled for July 28, 2015, tax payments were being consistently received, property at 102 E. Ayre Street sold, Waste Management missed a few residents because of inappropriate items being placed in the trash, and state health plan would be discussed in New Business.

Police Chief Capriglione presented his report. He introduced Patrolman Thomas "Dillon" Kashner. He presented his monthly statistics. Mayor Spencer asked if we followed state protocol for pursuits.

Alderman's Report - \$49,404 fines collected for June, 2015.

Maintenance Report – Robert Harvey advised that upon receiving three bids to fix the road on Water Street, the contract was awarded to Richard's Paving. The AC unit in the attic at the Old Town Hall broke down and bids were obtained and the project was awarded to Summit Mechanical. Lids on storm drains are being replaced. Solicitor Robinson asked about sewer lines because he is researching an easement with Harvey & Harvey and the town regarding the sewer line.

Code Enforcement – 102 E. Ayre Street sold. 120 E. Ayre Street obtained a demolition permit.

Solicitor Robinson worked on the two ordinances on the agenda – zoning districts and firearms ban in municipal buildings and sewer item. He asked Town Manager King about outstanding taxes.

Commissioner Joseph complimented the police department on their Facebook page. Vice Mayor Joswick said that he received a few complimentary phone calls about the Facebook page. Vice Mayor Joswick questioned whether the Oxford Houses could be “evicted.” Proper notification to the owner for a problem would be necessary as the town cannot force them out.

Mayor Spencer attended the league meeting with the Vice Mayor. United Water has been on Christian Street fixing some issues with water line.

New Business – 1st Reading – Ordinance #2015-002 – Prohibiting Firearms/Ammunition in Municipal Buildings and Police Stations in the Town of Newport. Motion to accept – Mayor Spencer; Second – Commissioner MacDonald. Vice Mayor Joswick questioned whether it affected concealed carry permit holders and it does not. Motion to accept first reading – Mayor Spencer; Second – Vice Mayor Joswick. Roll call vote – all ayes.

1st Reading – Ordinance #2015-001 – Comprehensive Plan – Renaming Zoning Classifications. Motion to accept – Mayor Spencer; Second – Vice Mayor Joswick. This ordinance only changes the zoning classifications/district names. Specific zoning changes have to be changed by separate ordinance. Town Manager King asked if definitions of the titles would be provided. Mayor Spencer indicated that great care was taken to ensure that no property was down-zoned. This is the first step in the eventual changes in zoning code. Motion to accept first reading – Mayor Spencer; Second – Commissioner Chatburn. Roll call vote – all ayes.

Vice Mayor Joswick introduced a potential ordinance that reverts the tax rate of a demolished property back to the former rate (building on property) if redevelopment of the property does not occur after a certain time period. It would not affect prior demolitions. Solicitor Robinson will prepare a draft ordinance for next meeting.

State healthcare plan – September 1, 2015, rates attached in packet. Six different plans that an employee can choose from; two are high deductible plans. Town Manager King recommends joining the plan and covering 85% of the basic plan rate for each employee who chooses to participate. If an employee chooses to upgrade their plan, the remaining cost would be their responsibility. The medical line item on the budget would not be affected. Letter of intent needs to be received by the state office by August 1. Commissioners were on board with joining the plan.

Motion to adjourn – Commissioner MacDonald; second – Mayor Spencer.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.

